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ABSTRACT

Fifteen of Texas's 49 public community/junior college districts maintain rural extension centers in small- to medium-sized cities located from 19 to 108 miles from campus. Operating out of borrowed or leased facilities, with no local income or tax base, these centers provide a regular schedule of credit classes to rural Texas residents. In February 1989, a survey of these 15 colleges was conducted to determine the level of Library/Learning Resources Center (LRC) services provided to the rural extension centers and their students. The survey instrument and brief descriptions of the library services provided by 13 responding community college to 31 towns are attached. (JMC)

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LIBRARY/LRC SERVICE TO RURAL EXTENSION CENTERS OF TEXAS PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

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LIBRARY/LRC SERVICE TO RURAL EXTENSION CENTERS OF TEXAS PUBLIC TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

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In the state of Texas, rural extension centers of public two-year colleges are maintained exclusively by institutions located in small-to-medium-sized cities with populations ranging from 2,500 to 100,000. The community college districts of the large urban areas do not maintain extension centers beyond their immediate service areas, limited in most cases by the county line, and in all cases are not concerned with the provision of remote library/LRC service because of the accessibility of the local LRC.

A rural extension center, as defined by this study, consists of a regular schedule of credit classes offered by the parent institution in a small city at least 20 miles distant from the main campus. One extension center 19 miles distant from its main campus, however, was included in this study because of its relatively large size and extensive offerings. The distances of the rural extension centers from their main campus ranged from this low of 19 miles to a maximum of 108 miles, with the median distance being 46.5 miles and the average distance being 45.8 miles.

Rural extension centers are maintained by their parent institutions for the purpose of providing classes and programs to

persons living beyond the normal commuting distance to the college, which in the vast distances of Texas can include a considerable number of residents. Additionally, in a state where public two-year college funding is enrollment-driven, these extension centers are a source of income for the parent institution. Offerings at the centers range from a few classes to full certificate programs.

In general, most of the following conditions exist at rural extension centers maintained by Texas two-year colleges with a few notable exceptions:

1. They are at a considerable distance from the main campus.
2. They are at a considerable distance from a major population center.
3. They are housed in borrowed or leased facilities.
4. Classes are most commonly taught by part-time instructors.
5. Administration of the smaller centers is generally done from the main campus with only occasional visits.
6. Support services, e.g., counseling, student activities, are minimal or nonexistent.
7. They are generally supported by enrollment-driven funds only and have no local income or tax base.

Given these conditions of operation, the provision of adequate library/LRC service to these rural extension centers is challenging at best and frustrating as a rule. Such service must generally be supported by the library/LRC budgets of the main campuses, which are seldom more than barely adequate in the stringent fiscal atmosphere

of the present. Separately identified budgets for library/LRC service to rural extension centers are rare.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools mandates the provision of adequate library/LRC service to extension centers in its Criteria for Accreditation; however, its criteria are nonspecific. Section 5.2.5, "Library Resources at Off-Campus Sites," of the 1988 edition of the Criteria for Accreditation states:

"At any off-campus location where credit courses are offered, an institution must ensure the provision of and access to adequate learning resources and services required to support the courses, programs and degrees offered. The institution must own the learning resources or provide them through formal agreements.

"Competent library personnel must be assigned duties in planning and providing library resources and services and in ascertaining their continued adequacy.

"When formal agreements are established for the provision of library resources and services, they must ensure access to library resources pertinent to the programs offered by the institution and must include provision for services and resources which support the institution's specific programs, in the field of study and at the degree level offered."

Aside from the Southern Association's prescriptive but very general imperatives, few written resources exist to assist the administrator charged with developing and maintaining library/LRC services to the rural extension center. The Association of College and Research Libraries has produced two documents which address this topic: "Guidelines for Extended Campus Library Services" (1982), and

"Guidelines for Branch Libraries in Colleges and Universities" (1975). Both documents are available from the American Library Association, but their age and brevity (two and three pages respectively) obviously limit their usefulness.

In Texas, the level of library/LRC service provided to rural extension centers of public two-year colleges varies from virtually none to full branch libraries staffed by professionals. Of the state's forty-nine public community/junior college districts, the author identified fifteen institutions which maintain rural extension centers as defined previously. The library/LRC directors of these fifteen institutions were surveyed as to the extent of services provided at their extension centers; comments were also solicited. The survey was conducted in February of 1989.

Although this survey was brief and informal, the level and degree of responses were such that some subjective conclusions may be drawn, the most obvious being that there is no predominant method for the provision of service to these centers. Local public libraries are much relied upon, with and without formal agreements. Distance does appear to be a particularly inhibiting factor beyond fifty miles or so, but this could also be attributed to location, population, and lack of applicable technology.

A copy of the survey instrument and information gathered from the thirteen respondents to the survey follow.

NAME OF COLLEGE:

NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON COMPLETING SURVEY:

We have extension centers offering credit courses in (city or cities):

Students and faculty at our extension center(s) receive the following library/learning resources services:

____ Full branch library/LRC maintained and supported by the college.

____ Extended services from the main campus library/LRC other than interlibrary loan by mail, e.g., courier service, telefacsimile, telephone reference service.

____ Contracted service from local public or academic library.

____ Service from local public or academic library, but without a formal agreement or support from the college.

____ Interlibrary loan by mail only.

____ No services.

____ Other (please specify):

COMMENTS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

____ PLEASE SHARE RESULTS OF SURVEY WITH ME.

COLLEGE	EXTENSION CENTER(S)*	LIBRARY/LRC SERVICES PROVIDED/COMMENTS
Bee	Alice(55) Kingsville(82)	Services from local public or academic library, but without a formal agreement or support from the college. Alice students use the public library as it is located across the street. A & I students can use the A & I library when necessary.
Blinn	Bryan(37)	Full branch library/LRC maintained and supported by the college, including extended services from the main campus library/LRC.
Clarendon	Childress(57) Pampa(46)	Courier service from main campus. Service from local public or academic library, but without a formal agreement or support from the college.
Grayson	Bonham(28) McKinney(42)	Service from local public or academic library, but without a formal agreement or support from the college. The Bonham program consists of a few classes at the high school. These students use the college library since it is only a 30-minute drive. The instructors in the LVN program at McKinney use the media production facilities at the college as well as media equipment placed in McKinney on permanent loan.
Hill	Cleburne(29)	Contracted service (as of Fall 1989) from local public library. We are in the process of automating the catalog and circulation using "The Assistant" from Library Automation Products in New York. When completed, there will be a terminal on the Cleburne campus (for online catalog only) and a courier service will be set up. One problem which will occur is that our library is not large enough to supply both campuses adequately. We are very much aware of the Southern Association criteria. We are in the middle of the self-study and will have an on-site visit in Spring of 1990.
Midland	Fort Stockton(108)	Service from local public library, but without a formal agreement or support from the college.
Odessa	Andrews(35) Kermit(47) Pyote(51)	Andrews and Kermit are LVN programs; small amount of materials maintained at each. Audiovisual equipment and software provided to Pyote via daily van delivery. Pyote students are also required to attend LRC orientation at main campus.
Ranger	Brownwood(69) Comanche(50) Graham(52)	Comanche, Graham served by local public libraries; no formal agreements. LVN students at Brownwood may use the library of Howard Payne University per agreement.

*** Number in parentheses is approximate distance in miles from main campus**

South Plains	Littlefield(24) Lubbock(31) Morton(26) Muleshoe(56) Reese AFB(28)	Lubbock campus only has full branch library/LRC. Littlefield, Morton, and Muleshoe have no services; we only offer two or three classes a semester at these locations. Reese has been a problem. We have made agreements, only to have a new librarian cancel them. At present, what library service is offered is by courier or faculty member taking books with them. I am afraid we will be in trouble when the Southern Association comes again in three years.
Southwest Texas	Del Rio(72) Eagle Pass(66)	Extended services from the main campus: our mobile library bus, carrying a small permanent collection and books requested by instructors each semester, stays at our off-campus centers for six hours, one day a week at each place. Students and instructors may check out materials from the bus as will as make requests for other materials to be brought from the Uvalde campus library or through interlibrary loan. We will soon install a library automation system which will include a dial-up computer catalog and circulation service at each of our off-campus sites. We plan to have 3-times-a-week courier service when that is in place. This is being done to meet requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
Trinity Valley	Kaufman(40) Palestine(36)	Full branch library/LRC at each location; also service from local public libraries without formal agreement. The Athens campus is the main depository for most non-print items. The media department provides all media services needed. They also purchase and repair all media equipment.
Vernon	Iowa Park(34) Seymour(54) Wichita Falls(51)	Vernon Regional Junior College maintains extension centers in Wichita Falls and Seymour, and supports branch libraries of one to two thousand books at all locations. The library at the Career Development Center in Wichita Falls contains approximately 3,560 volumes. Branch libraries are staffed by paraprofessionals or work-study students under the supervision of faculty, and all technical services are performed at the Wright Library in Vernon. In addition, VRJC maintains formal agreements with area public and academic libraries whereby our students can check out material from those facilities. These services are not contracted, but provided free of charge.
Weatherford	Bridgeport(36) Decatur(35) Granbury(24) Mineral Wells(19)	Weatherford College has had a branch library at Mineral Wells (Education Center) since 1980. At Granbury, Bridgeport, and Decatur, informal agreements with both the public and high school libraries are renewed each year; however, a formal agreement with an outline of expected resources and services is being studied at this time and hopefully can be in our files by Fall 1989. Weatherford College uses the high school facilities at these three above named centers.

Institutions Surveyed: 15
Institutions Responding: 13
Median Distance of Extension Centers: 46.5 miles
Minimum Distance: 19 miles
Maximum Distance: 108 miles
Average Distance: 45.8 miles

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